

Docket 59735
Serial No. 10/649, 996

PATENT APPLICATION

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response to the Office Action on the merits dated June 23, 2005. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 20-24 stand withdrawn pursuant to a previous restriction requirement. By the foregoing amendment, claims 2, 3, and 18-19 have been canceled and claims 1, 4, 5, 7-9, and 15 have been amended. Therefore, claims 1 and 4-17 remain in this application with claims 1 and 15 being independent.

IN THE CLAIMS:

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections:

Claims 1-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,749 to Ford in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,447,758 to Pelletier and GB 2,176,226 to French. The examiner states that Ford discloses the claimed invention except for being utilized for Venetian blinds or using a laser. As will be shown below, Ford does not disclose many aspects of the claimed invention and does not render the present invention obvious when considered solely or in combination with any other reference. Therefore, for reasons discussed in detail below, the applicant asserts that Ford is improperly combined with the other references and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn in whole or in part.

Docket 59735
Serial No. 10/649, 996

PATENT APPLICATION

First, the examiner admits that Ford teaches that an inner area of the upper support is used to apply a decoration on the work piece. To be clear, Ford teaches that the upper support itself applies a decoration to the work piece (in this case a shirt). This teaching is quite contrary to the present invention. More particularly, claims 1 and 18 recite that the right and left side portions of the top and bottom frames define an exposed area therebetween for receiving a decorative graphic. Unlike Ford, the top frame in the present invention does not apply a decoration. There is no disclosure in Ford or any other reference that teaches the claimed structure. It should also be appreciated that both the top and bottom frames define an exposed area. In other words, a graphic decoration may be applied to both sides without any reversal of the work piece held by the frames! Certainly, this structure and utility is not taught or suggested in any of the references, whether considered singly or in combination.

Further, the presently claimed invention recites at least one bracket and possibly multiple oppositely disposed brackets that are removably coupled at specific locations to the top and bottom frames for holding portions of the blind assembly that is not otherwise clamped between the frames. As specifically described on page 10 of the original specification, the brackets provide a unique shelving structure suited to blinds. For example, there may be several blinds that cannot be clamped within the frames and the brackets are needed to hold the unclamped blinds during use. This structure is not addressed by Ford or any other reference and is not addressed by the examiner. The boss arrangement for enabling a selective positioning and releasable attachment is equally unaddressed by the prior art or by the examiner. This is a point of novelty that distinguishes over the prior art. For these

Docket 59735
Serial No. 10/649, 996

PATENT APPLICATION

reasons, the applicant strongly asserts that Ford is improperly combined in support of the present rejection.

Still further, the examiner correctly observed that Ford teaches a fabric platform or support (14). It appears that the support taught by Ford is merely to provide a solid surface to facilitate application of the decoration to a fabric tightly stretched thereon. However, there is no disclosure or teaching in Ford concerning a slip resistant pad positioned on opposing faces of the frames for engaging the slats of a blind assembly. In addition, claim 19 of the present application recites that slip resistant pad material is for providing a soft, slip resistant surface. As Ford apparently teaches a solid support platform, Ford appears to teach away from the present invention and would not have led one of ordinary skill in the art to the invention as recited herein. For this additional reason, the applicant respectfully urges the examiner to withdraw the present rejection.

Without admitting the propriety of these rejections, claim 1 has been amended to even more clearly recite the novelty of the present invention and claims 2 and 3 have been canceled. Claims 4-5 and 7-9 have also been amended to properly depend from claim 1. More particularly, claim 1 now recites not only the exposed area defined by the left and right side portions of the top and bottom frames, but also the unique brackets that are releasably and selectively attached to ends of the top and bottom frames. For all of the reasons discussed above, claim 1 should now be in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested along with claims 4-14 which depend therefrom.

Also without admitting the propriety of the present rejections, claim 15 has been similarly amended, claims 18 and 19 have been canceled. More particularly, claim 15 now

Docket 59735
Serial No. 10/649, 996


PATENT APPLICATION

recites a clamping apparatus having bracket means for holding portions of the blind assembly not clamped between the frames, and also recites that the top and bottom frames define an exposed area for receiving a decorative graphic. Claim 15 has also been amended to recite a slip resistant pad material for providing a soft, slip resistant surface for engaging the slats of the blind assembly. Claim 15, when viewed as a whole, now recites an invention not disclosed, taught, or suggested by Ford, whether considered solely or in combination with any of the cited references. For these reasons, claim 15 should now be in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested along with claims 16 and 17 which depend therefrom.

This application should now be in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested. If the examiner has any suggestions that would place this application in even better condition for allowance, he is invited to contact the applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: August 29, 2005


Dale J. Ream
Patent Reg. No. 45,798

HARSHAW RESEARCH, INC.
Lawyer's Building
2nd & Main
P.O. Box 418
Telephone (785) 242-9500
Facsimile (785) 242-3308